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BEWAREDNESS

BY HENRY D. ESTABROOK,

New York City.

Fellow Americans! Are we a free people, a people trying the experiment of self-government—trying to work out our own salvation without the guardianship of king, czar, pope or potentate? You know that we are. Who gave us our liberty? Nobody. We conquered it for ourselves in war against a king, and no king ever yet surrendered to his subjects except upon compulsion. And as our government was won by war, so its integrity was preserved by war, and so under God we will continue to defend it, by war if need be, though all the world should come at us in arms.

This is not rhetoric or bombast but the solemn statement of a solemn fact, and you know it. I agree as to the horrors of war. It is to prevent the horrors of war that I am in favor of preparedness. Whatever the dangers of a big standing army may be to the liberties of a people, they cannot obtain in this country, thanks to the wisdom of our forefathers, who were as much opposed to militarism as we are. Napoleon said that "an army crawls on its belly," meaning that it must have food and clothing and equipment. In other words, it must have money and lots of it. Now our Constitution wisely provides that every revenue measure must originate in the House of Representatives, the popular branch of our national legislature, so numerous in its membership that it may fairly be said to constitute the people themselves. Our Constitution wisely forbids any appropriation of money by the House of Representatives for a longer period than two years. Hence the army and navy—West Point itself—are absolutely dependent for their existence from year to year on the will of the people.

The pacifist warns us that we should be afraid to trust the protection of our lives and liberties and properties to any army made up of American citizens, but sees no danger whatever in trusting our lives, liberties and properties to the tender mercies of armies made up of citizens of Europe and Japan! Excuse me! If I must live in terror of an army I insist that it shall be an army made up

of my fellow citizens and not an army of foreign puppets trained to do the bidding of a bloodthirsty autocrat. Our own history vindicates the wisdom of our fathers, for after every one of our own wars our armies have melted back into the body of the people as naturally and inevitably as the smoke of battle melts into the firmament. But if—in the words of the soldier-poet—

If by treacherous yielding chance
Our land hath trafficked its splendid anger,
For only a lean inheritance
Of outward lustness and inward languor;
Why then, O comrades! it were full well
If the shocks of our armies were not over;
For the Lord made men to conquer hell,
And not to fatten like kine in clover!

We have been taught that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We repeat this phrase over and over as a reminder of our duty, and not as a mere ritual that by mouthing has lost its meaning. And what is vigilance but preparedness?

The significance of preparedness is the significance that inheres in every precaution taken to avoid or minimize possible dangers. Caution means "wariness," from whence comes our word "beware." The motive back of bewaredness is the same precisely that suggests to Mr. Henry Ford, for example, the wisdom of taking out fire insurance on his automobile plant, or, better yet, of spending enough money in the first instance to make it fireproof. It is the same precisely that suggests to a steamship company the wisdom of equipping its ships with bulkheads and lifeboats. It is not expected that any ship will founder on an iceberg. The vigilance and care of trained men will be employed to prevent such a catastrophe. But the ship is liable to encounter sudden storms, black nights, and fog banks; and if a wreck should occur through any misadventure, the money spent for preparedness will have been well spent. The whole philosophy and significance of preparedness are summed up in the current phrase "safety first." The man who goes through life haphazard and trusting to luck may claim, and even believe, that he is trusting in God and is therefore wiser, better, and more righteous than his neighbors, but he is nothing of the sort. The foolish virgins were Portias compared with him. No man has a right to lay down on God for help until he has done all within his own power to help himself. God hates a quitter as he does a liar.

Specifically, and as a national issue, preparedness means a military equipment adequate to the defense of this government against possible foreign aggression, and to give sanction to the just demands of our government upon all those who would otherwise disregard them. It is amazing to me that any genuine American should oppose a program looking to this end. Why should our government maintain sheriffs, policemen, a constabulary, and a militia to enforce its demands upon its own citizens, but with fatuous imbecility take it out in scolding and making faces at a foreign enemy? The placid assumption of the pacifists, so called, that preparedness necessarily means war with somebody, or that those who are in favor of it are less concerned than themselves in preserving the peace, is on a par with that assumption once made by Mr. Bryan that all those who were in favor of an honest dollar and opposed to the free coinage of silver at sixteen to one were enemies of the common people to be crucified on a cross of gold. And you will recall how near Mr. Bryan came to making them believe all this. Lincoln said "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." An inscrutable destiny seems to have set apart Mr. Bryan as the mouthpiece and exponent of the contingent that can be fooled all of the time, and unhappily the contingent is large enough to make it worth his while.

But listen to this from the Holy Bible—to what it says is liable to happen to a "careless" people; a smug people,—a people sitting in fancied security, trusting to their blandishments, their enchanters, and their stargazers to ward off possible evils. I read from Isaiah:

Now therefore hear this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly (or sittest securely) that sayest in thine heart, I am and there is none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood; in their full measure shall they come upon thee, despite of the multitude of thy sorceries, and the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said, None seeth me; thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and there is none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth (or how to charm it away): and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou knowest not. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be, thou shalt be able to prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels; let now the astrologers (or diviners of

the heavens), the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; it shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before. Thus shall the things be unto thee wherein thou hast labored: they that have trafficked with thee from thy youth shall wander every one his own way; there shall be none to save thee.

Even Jeremiah could not resist the temptations offered by the unpreparedness of a people, for he said to his own people:

Arise, get you up into a nation that is at ease, that dwelleth without care: saith the Lord, which hath neither gates nor bars, which dwelleth alone.

And their camels shall be a booty and the multitude of their cattle a spoil. I will bring their calamity from every side, saith the Lord.

And we are unprepared. We have neither "gates nor bars." We are careless of the future, and the machinations of wicked men and the ambitions of royalty. We sit in fancied security, trusting to the potency of our riches and the divinations of our stargazers. We are fat, otiose, spineless, insolent and rich. Could the devil himself add anything to this catalogue to make us riper for plucking? Yes! Yes, for with the best intentions possible we have succeeded in incurring the enmity of every nation on earth. Is this state of imbecility to endure? Shall we continue to listen to a wandering voice? When this voice was recently removed from the counsels of our government, we thought, good easy souls, we had gotten rid of it. Has Mr. Bryan proved himself so good a prophet in the past that we can afford to trust him for the future?

Preparedness, therefore, is only another name for insurance against contingent evils. And America has more things of value to insure and more money to pay the premium than any nation in the world. What is an insurance premium? It is simply the price paid for peace of mind, for sleep o' nights. It represents, not an investment as a source of income, but an annual charge upon the business protected by it. The insurer kisses his money good-bye, hoping that the calamity which alone would make it an investment instead of an expense will never happen. The amount of his premium is based on the value of the property insured and the character of the risk. A marine risk at present rates costs money. Our ship of state is freighted with property worth at least 187 billions of dollars, and has a passenger list of 100 million souls. Can we afford to insure it at a premium of about one-fourth of 1 per cent of

the value of our goods alone? Can we not afford to spend as much—nay, only a fraction as much—on our army and navy as we squander every year on whiskey and tobacco, or half as much as we pay every year for automobiles? Oh! but it is not the expenditure of dollars *per se* that your pacifist objects to. He has a soul above skittles and beer.

It is the principle of the thing. War, he says, is the curse of the world, and it is time for the people to put an end to it. Amen! and Amen! But how would Chinafying America accomplish that result? The people themselves seldom make war. Only kings make war, and I tell you that so long as there are kings in the world there is bound to be war in the world. We may never hope for universal peace until every king and kinglet, prince and princelet—together with their preposterous claims of divine right—together with all the pomps and shams and frauds of royalty have been extirpated from the earth. The sword of liberty is not a metaphor. So long as tyranny goes armed, liberty dare not disarm.

America would fain be neutral, but if war is hell, neutrality as we have found it isn't exactly heaven, and so preparedness becomes religion by a sort of necessity.

Washington called it the most effective way of preserving peace and declared that a free people should not only be always armed but disciplined according to a plan.

Lincoln declared that war in defense of national life is not immoral, and that war in defense of independence is an inevitable part of the discipline of nations.

Is America a nation with the noblest institutions to maintain, or a salmagundi of nationalities—a congeries of foreigners over here for the money in it?

And America has more than her physical possessions to defend. These and her opportunities, she willingly shares with all who come to her. But the thoughts that are hers, the ideas that are hers, and hers alone,—she is bound to defend always, in all ways, and against all comers!

For America today is the cynosure of the world. Her ideas, like the ideas of Christianity, will disturb the conscience and inspire the hopes of humanity until the coming of that perfect day. Even China has seen our flag that symbolizes our ideas and our ideals, and her senile, rheumy eyes have kindled at the sight. From out

its crimson arteries she has drawn new life, a younger blood, and has felt the pulse and tingle of the transfusion. China—old, old China, twin sister of Time himself—China has seen Old Glory and is struggling with the thought of liberty. And we Americans know there are thoughts so big that only a Caesarian operation can give them birth. Jones Bill or no Jones Bill, our flag is in the Orient to stay. It will never budge from the ramparts of Manila, but there, like a constellation in freedom's skies, its stars shall multiply and shine forever.